

determining how legislation will move through the House. I am very privileged to do this job for our esteemed Speaker, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT).

Speaker HASTERT perhaps, more than any other in recent history, is uniquely qualified to bring a historical perspective to his job as Speaker as he was, as we all know, a government and history teacher at Yorkville High School in Illinois.

Because of his deep-rooted interest in the history of our Republic, it is my pleasure to announce to our colleagues that Speaker HASTERT, along with former Speakers Jim Wright, Tom Foley, and Newt Gingrich, will be participating in an event entitled, "The Changing Nature of the House Speakership: The Cannon Centenary Conference." This conference, named for Joseph Cannon, is being held on November 12 and is jointly sponsored by the Congressional Research Service and the University of Oklahoma.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of our colleagues to take the time to participate in this conference and perhaps learn something new about the history of this great body and the institution of the Speakership.

Mr. Speaker, I have a copy of the program here, and I will include it in the RECORD at this point.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE HOUSE SPEAKERSHIP: THE CANNON CENTENARY CONFERENCE

A HISTORIC EVENT FEATURING ALL THREE LIVING FORMER SPEAKERS AND THE CURRENT SPEAKER

The Speaker of the House is second in line only to the Vice President to succeed to the presidency. Few lawmakers can be said to possess the visibility and authority of the Speaker.

The role of the Speaker has been shaped largely by history rather than by constitutional definition. The Speakership has been influenced by the individuals who have held the post and the circumstances in which they have operated; formal obligations that have been assigned to the office by House rules and by statute; the character of the House as a political and constitutional institution; and the traditions and customs that have evolved over time.

We invite you to attend a one-day conference examining the changing nature of the speakership—a historic event featuring the current Speaker and all three living former Speakers and commemorating the centenary of one of the most noteworthy Speakers in the history of the House: Joseph G. Cannon, Republican from Illinois, who served as Speaker from 1903 to 1911.

This conference will explore the evolving nature of the speakership and discuss the key forces and factors which influence the ability to lead a large and complex institutions like the House of Representatives.

8:30 am Registration

9:00 am Welcome and Introduction—Daniel P. Mulhollan, Director, Congressional Research Service

9:15 am The O'Neill Speakership, 1977-1987—John A. Farrell, author, "Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Century" Comments by Hon. Mickey Edwards and Hon. Dan Rostenkowski

10:45 am Hon. James C. Wright, Jr., Speaker, 1987-1989—Comments by Hon. David E. Bonior and Hon. Tom Loeffler

Noon-1:45 pm Hon. J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker

2:00 pm Hon. Thomas S. Foley, Speaker, 1989-1995—Comments by Hon. Vic Fazio and Hon. Bill Frenzel

3:30 pm Hon. Newt Gingrich, Speaker, 1995-1999—Comments by Hon. Leon E. Panetta and Hon. Robert S. Walker

4:45-5:15 pm Conference Summary—Robert V. Remini, author of books on Andrew Jackson, John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

REPUBLICANS SEND WRONG MESSAGE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, with Veteran's Day nearing, I am ashamed, frankly, of how little this House of Representatives has done for the men and women who have served our country. There has been lots of talk, good talk, especially in the early days of November, but not much real action. In honor of our veterans, the men and women who are risking their lives today, tonight, and tomorrow in Iraq and Afghanistan, the many who have lost and continue to lose their good health and even their lives, our message should reflect our admiration for their commitment. It does not.

In July, House Republican leadership, through a procedural maneuver, struck down an attempt to restore \$1.8 billion, just to restore \$1.8 billion in veterans health care funding when they forced the House to vote on a bill with inadequate funding for veterans' health. Democrats and veterans' groups opposed the bill and demanded that the Republican leadership restore funding to the Veterans Administration. Now, it appears the VA-HUD appropriations bill will come out of conference \$500 million short of the VA funding level that we demanded and the Republicans promised in their budget resolution.

What kind of Veteran's Day message is that sending?

In light of the inadequacy of the majority's VA spending bill, Democrats fought for consideration of other solutions that would make up for those shortfalls that Republicans offered. Over 200 Democrats signed a discharge petition offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MARSHALL) that would force the House to consider legislation to eliminate the discriminatory disabled veterans tax. Responding, finally, to this pressure, Republican leaders offered a proposal that would only reach 50 percent of those veterans unfairly affected by this tax. Because this pro-

posal would be phased in over 10 years, reduction of the tax would be very small in the early years of the proposal and veterans would not even receive their full benefits. This is the best Republicans could offer: Veterans would not receive their full benefits until 2014, 11 years away.

This so-called solution pits one group of veterans against another group of veterans, hardly something we should do any time, but especially something we should not do in wartime. That is some message.

Democrats have offered a legislative package that does the right thing. Our proposal increases veterans' health care over the next 10 years by \$10 billion. It would give the disabled veterans' tax and pay veterans \$500 a month if their disability claim has been left pending for longer than 6 months. It would give \$1,000 bonuses for those soldiers returning home from Iraq and from Afghanistan. It would make military pay increases permanent for those in imminent danger and away from their families.

The Republicans have offered so much less; in fact, they have taken away. As soon as President Bush took office, he raised the copay at veterans' clinics across the country by 350 percent, from \$2 to \$7 per veteran per prescription drug per month. He has since proposed to raise that to \$15, from \$2 to \$7 to \$15; in effect, slashing the drug benefit that veterans have deservedly gotten in this country.

The President and Republicans have also cut education benefits.

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Why are they cutting education benefits to veterans? Why are they cutting prescription drug benefits to veterans? The answer is simple. It is to make room for the Republican tax cut. The tax cut, everyone knows that by now, the tax cut, that if you are a millionaire you get \$93,000 tax savings. Half of the people in my district in Ohio, northeast Ohio, in Akron and Lorain, Northridge, half of them get zero. Half the people in my State get zero while the "leave no millionaire behind" tax cut from the President goes forward, making it not just unfair in terms of the taxes that the wealthy get benefits from in a tax cut, and the middle class and working families do not, but also that is why he has cut veterans benefits, that is why the President has cut education benefits.

This was all topped off, Mr. Speaker, by the actions early this fall where almost 200 Members of Congress on the Republican side voted for a \$3,500, in fact, pay increase for themselves and voted against a \$1,500 pay increase for our troops overseas. That is the height of hypocrisy. We do tax cuts for millionaires, we do pay increases for ourselves, then we turn around, my friends on the other side of the aisle, and do not vote for a pay increase for our young men and women in uniform.

Our young men and women were sent to Iraq on the promise that when they

returned to this country, this country would care for them. Unless the Republican majority considers proposals that fully meet the needs of veterans, as my colleagues and I have tried to do, they are breaking that covenant.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONFIRMATION OF JUDICIAL NOMINEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I point out to the body and the American people that the President had made an excellent nomination in the name of Miguel Estrada. And for 28 months Mr. Estrada was held in limbo while we waited for the Constitution to be upheld in the other body. And that would be the advise and consent clause of the Constitution that establishes that the Senate shall confirm the President's nominees.

Now that 28 months and 5 days have passed, Mr. Estrada determined he needed to move on with his life. But the rules in the other body that establish a 60 percent vote to end a filibuster, have effectively established that standard as a requirement for a confirmation of a justice.

And now today, and as I read some of the publications that are out, I am heartened to learn that through the newspapers that the other body is planning to debate judicial nominations starting on Wednesday evening of this week. They pledge to debate the issue all night to get their message to the American people. I applaud them in their endeavor, and I will do all I can to support their efforts.

The blockage of judicial nominations by a determined minority is one of the most important issues before our Nation. Nothing less than our Constitution is at stake. I believe the Constitution is clear: a minority cannot impose a supermajority requirement for confirmation of a judicial nominee. The President is entitled to confirmation of his nominees if they garner a simple majority.

The advise and consent clause, which is article II, section 2 of the United States Constitution requires a simple majority of 51 votes for confirmation of a judicial nominee. Many nominees have 51 such votes. And that standard is the standard that has existed since the ratification of our Constitution in 1789, well over 200 years. But there is a new standard now, brought about by the minority. I firmly believe that it is

unconstitutional to require a higher standard.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind all Members to avoid improper references to Senate proceedings, including confirmation of judicial proceedings.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that it is unconstitutional to require a higher standard for nominees than the simple majority specified in our Constitution. Janice Rogers Brown, Carolyn Kuhl, Charles Pickering, William Pryor, and Priscilla Owen, who are all waiting to be confirmed, deserve an up-or-down vote.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to bring attention to the House of a few of these well-qualified nominees. Janice Rogers Brown.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. If the gentleman will suspend. The Chair will again remind Members of the House to avoid improper references to Senate proceedings, including using Senate action on particular nominees.

The gentleman may continue.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I will adhere to that directive. I will say these are reliable people. And in the case of Janice Rogers Brown, she is a classic American success story. She is a daughter of an Alabama sharecropper who became a member of the California Supreme Court. She was reelected to the Supreme Court by 76 percent, which was the largest margin of any justice running that year. More importantly, she is a well-qualified and excellent judge. She applies the law without bias and with an even hand.

William Pryor, another nominee, has a model judicial temperament. As attorney general, Pryor has demonstrated an ability to make decisions in full compliance with the letter of existing law, despite his own personal beliefs or preference. Even while Pryor personally opposed abortion, he has faithfully applied the Supreme Court's rulings on partial birth abortion and instructed Alabama officials not to enforce the State's partial birth abortion ban in a way that would violate the case law. It is clear that William Pryor would interpret the law, not make the law from the bench.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the American people will support this endeavor.

I hope the American people will listen next week when the qualifications of nominees such as William Pryor, Janice Rogers Brown and others are debated by the other body. At issue is one of the most important Constitutional questions of our time. Will the Constitution be upheld? Or will a determined minority be allowed to thwart the clear text of the Constitution and the will of the American people?

TAXING THE DISABLED VETERAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, November 11, Veterans' Day, more than 130,000 of our troops are in Iraq and at risk, thousands more in Afghanistan and elsewhere and around the world; and here at home we have 25.3 million veterans, 376,000 in my State.

What are we doing in celebration of Veterans' Day? Well, unfortunately, the Congress has done little. In fact, I would say this is the most antiveteran Congress under the most antiveteran administration in recent history.

Mr. Speaker, 150,000 veterans have waited 6 months or longer for basic health care appointments; 14,000 veterans have been waiting 15 months or longer for their expedited disability claims; 560,000 disabled veterans are subject to the disabled veterans tax. Yes, that is right. They are taxed because they are disabled veterans. It is a special tax levied on them.

The President refused to spend \$275 million in emergency money, but they have figured out a way to cut down the waiting list for health care. We can thank President Bush for that. His administration actually cut off 164,000 veterans from eligibility for health care this year, those who do not have service-connected disabilities but make as little as \$25,000 a year. He did find a way to reduce the waiting list by eliminating the eligibility of yet another group of veterans. Not the first time this administration has done that, not the last.

They proposed to double the drug copayment for veterans from \$7 to \$15. That was the President's and the Republican majority's proposal in this House. Luckily, it has not gone forward.

Finally, the House majority Republicans in their budget resolution cut \$14 billion over the next 10 years from veterans programs.

Now, to focus particularly on the disabled veterans tax, it is odd in a Congress that can borrow money, which is what we are doing because we are running deficits, that can borrow money to give each millionaire an average tax cut of \$93,000, that can borrow money to relieve the horrible burden from people who invest for a living, do not work for wages, but invest for a living, of paying taxes on the dividends on their dividend-paying stocks. Not too many of these vets that are disqualified have dividend-paying stocks. In fact, most Americans do not have dividend-paying stocks. But that investor class, they are going to get exempted from paying that horrible burden. The millionaires, \$93,000. We are going to borrow the money to give them that benefit. But somehow we cannot repeal a tax on disabled veterans which says that they will be offset dollar for dollar their veterans disability benefit which they earned against their military retirement pay. These are people who gave a career, a lifetime in service for their country, and somehow we cannot do that.

Now, there is a bill pending that would actually repeal the entire tax.